

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 20364 261213Z

44

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1898

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 20364

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FUTURE ROLE OF RED

REF: A. STATE 205849; B. BANGKOK 19795

1. REF A. REQUESTED THE VIEWS OF RED ON PROPOSED GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF RED AS WELL AS THE FY 1977 EAST ASIA REGIONAL BUDGET SUBMISSION. REF B IS RED'S REPLY. I AM NOT AWARE OF THE DETAILS OF DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAVE PROBABLY BEEN HELD IN WASHINGTON WITH AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE, BUT OFFER THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN REACHING A DECISION ON THIS MATTER.

2. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT REFERENCED A CONTAINED REASONABLE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE ORIENTATION OF RED, PARTICULARLY THE STATEMENT THAT EMPHASIS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS WOULD BE PHASED DOWN AND THAT THERE WOULD BE NO ACTIVE EFFORTS TO STIMULATE NEW INITIATIVES. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE ARE RESIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH SOME OF THE INSTITUTIONS WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN ESTABLISHED AND IN WHICH RED HAS BEEN DEEPLY INVOLVED. SOME ONE SHOULD MEET OUR OBLIGATIONS TO THESE INSTITUTIONS FOR THE NEXT YEAR OR SO, AND IT SEEMS REASONABLE TO LET RED DO THIS SINCE IT ALREADY HAS THE EXPERTISE. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, TWO REMAINING PROBLEMS.

3. THE FIRST CONCERNS PERSONNEL. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT MEETING
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 20364 261213Z

THESE RESPONSIBILITIES OR EVEN OTHERS WHICH MIGHT REASONABLY

BE EXPECTED TO BE LEVIED ON RED WOULD REQUIRE THE STAFFING PROPOSED IN PARAGRAPH 4 OF REF B. EXCLUDING OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO RED BUT ACTUALLY WORKING SOMEWHERE ELSE AND THE OFFICER SUPPORTING ESCAP, WHO WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO THE EMBASSY AT THE END OF THIS CALENDAR YEAR, RED WOULD, UNDER THE PROPOSAL IN REF B, STILL HAVE ELEVEN AUTHORIZED AMERICAN POSITIONS, INCLUDING A DIRECTOR AND A DEPUTY. UNLESS WASHINGTON HAS ADDITIONAL, SUBSTANTIAL DUTIES IN MIND WHICH COULD LOGICALLY BE PERFORMED BY RED, I WOULD THINK THAT THE OFFICE WOULD REQUIRE NO MORE THAN THREE OR AT THE MOST FOUR OFFICERS AND A MAXIMUM OF TWO SECRETARIES. FURTHER REDUCTIONS COULD BE MADE IN A YEAR AS WE COMPLETE OUR OBLIGATIONS TO REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

4. THE SECOND ISSUE CENTERS AROUND THE LOCATION OF RED. THE FOREIGN SERVICE INSPECTORS RECOMMENDED EARLIER THIS YEAR THAT "THE DEPARTMENT, IN CONSULTATIONS WITH AID, SHOULD DETERMINE WHETHER THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (RED) UNIT WOULD PERFORM MORE EFFICIENTLY IF MOVED BACK TO WASHINGTON." THIS POSSIBILITY OF MOVING THE BASIC FUNCTION TO WASHINGTON, WITH BACKSTOPPING BY OUR MISSION SHOULD BE EXPLORED NOW BEFORE ANY FINAL DECISIONS ARE MADE REGARDING STAFFING OF RED. SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE NEED TO REDUCE OUR OFFICIAL PRESENCE IN BANGKOK. IF THERE ARE OVERRIDING REASONS TO KEEP A SMALL RED OFFICE HERE FOR AN INTERIM PERIOD WE CAN GO ALONG WITH THIS BUT THE OFFICE SHOULD, OF COURSE, BE FIRMLY ANCHORED WITHIN THE MISSION.

5. LOOK FORWARD TO DISCUSSING THIS WITH ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR GARDINER.
MASTERS

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